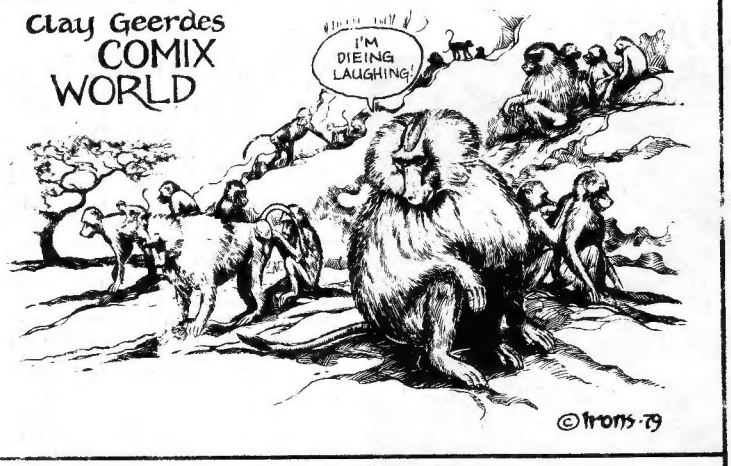
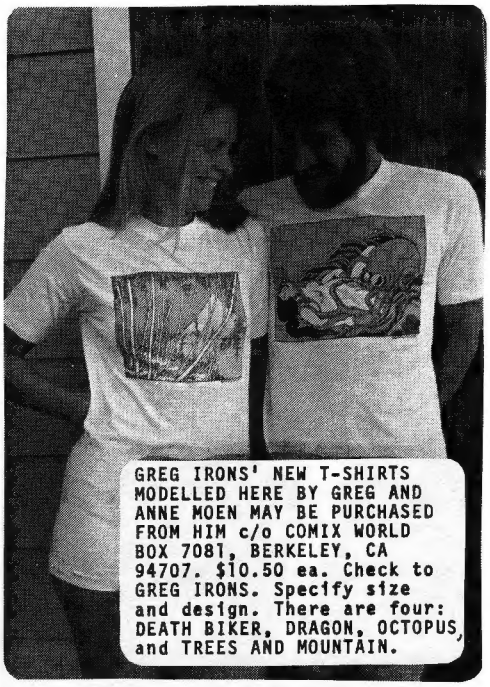


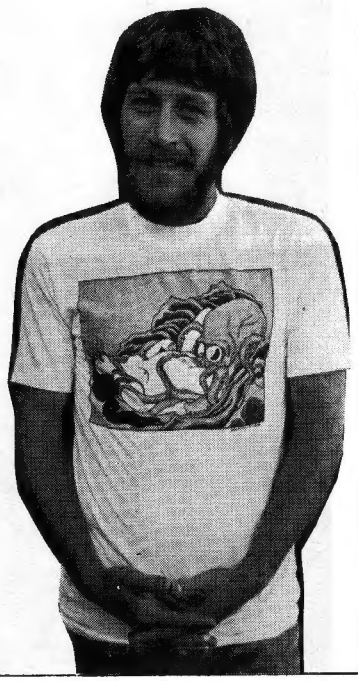
COMIX WORLD 127. AUGUST 15, 1979. © CLAY GEERDES, BOX 7081, BERK, CA 94707. World Rights Reserved. Subs: $6 for 24, $10 for 48. Ads $5-10. Logo by Greg Irons. Greg was born on September 29, 1947 in Philadelphia, PA. His father was in advertising; his mother a Registerred Nurse. He attended Upper Marion High School until the tenth grade. School bored him and he spent a lot of his time in Philly wandering around on the docks and seeing museums. After a short time in a military school, he cut his ties and went on the road. He hit Haight-Ashbury in April of 1967, did enough poster work for the Fillmore and Family Dog to save up some money, and went to Europe where he spent the end of the sixties. During his eight months in London, he learned the craft of animation doing a lot of work on YELLOW SUBMARINE. He returned to the U.S. in 1969 when the poster trip was coming to an end. While abroad, he had done a lot of drawing in his sketchbook, much of the material that was to appear in his early comics, YELLOW DOG 15, HEAVY, the work strongly related to animated film. Greg's drawing style was influenced by the work of Jack Davis and Wally Wood via paperback reprints of the early MADs and he had long been aware of the comic form and its potential. He was familiar with Crumb's early work from YARROWSTALKS, which was published in Philadelphia, but the first ZAP he saw was ZAP 3. Griffin's comic art ballroom poster impressed him, but as Greg said, "In spite of the fact that you have read a thousand comic strips, it's a different deal to draw them. My posters had a lot going on in them and were probably more comix-oriented than those of a lot of other people, but it's difficult to just jump into comics. What are you going to do comics about?" He went to see Griffin, because he had seen ZAP and thought it was the right vehicle for him, but he found ZAP closed by then with the space spoken for by Moscoso, Williams Wilson, Spain, et al. Griffin encouraged Greg and he did a strip and took it to Crumb who was living in Haight-Ashbury. Crumb liked the idea and encouraged Greg to finish it. He did and took

-GREG IRONS-

it back to Crumb's. Crumb wasn't there that day and he gave it to Dana. The strip got lost and Greg got discouraged with trying to deal with the ZAP folks. The artists had all been receptive to him, but nothing seemed to be happening as far as getting his work into print, so he took the strip to Print Mint and Don Schenker printed it in YELLOW DOG. The Schenkers and Ritas were partners in the Print Mint at the time and they encouraged a lot of artists to do books. Greg saw that the best way to go was to do his own book and he did HEAVY TRAGICOMICS. "One of the things I was doing at this time was working for the Berkeley TRIBE, which was a splinter group from Berkeley BARB, and Dave Sheridan was working there so I met him. He was working with Fred Schrier on MOTHER'S OATS. Also at the time I met Gary Arlington at his store on 23rd Street. He had some specific ideas on the kind of comics he wanted to publish--I saw him at the time as a potential publisher. He showed me all these EC comics. He had the idea of doing an EC revival and doing SKULL COMICS. He laid about ten ECs on me and said 'Go home and read these and see what you think.' Well, I flipped out on those ECs. I never knew about EC's at all. I knew about MAD and I knew some of the artists, but I had no idea they had done all this other stuff. So I went home and did a story for SKULL COMICS and an inside cover and I showed it to Arlington and he said great, why don't you be editor so I said okay, great, I'm editor. I asked Sheridan to do something and I asked Jaxon to do something. He was kind of at a depressed part of his career and I think that SKULL COMICS kind of revitalized him, too. I asked Shrier to do a story and Rory Hayes to do a short piece." This became the second wave of underground comix. Ron Turner was involved with the Berkeley Ecology Center at the time and he came along commissioning a book relative to ecology. Gary Arlington came up with the title SLOW DEATH FUNNIES. Gary always had the ideas, but not the money, so SKULL 1 was published by Rip Off Press, while Ron Turner borrowed some money from his father and published SLOW DEATH 1. Later when Ron went into full-time publishing he took over the SKULL title as well. It had been Arlington's idea to revive the EC horror line with SKULL, then to revive the Science-fiction line with another title. In the artists' thinking, SLOW DEATH was that title. Greg explained that the two titles went to Ron Turner, because he offered money up front at a time when the artists needed it badly. Rip Off had run SKULL 1 with the stipulation that no royalties would be paid until after the book sold. We talked about Greg's work re the Viet Nam war in LEGION OF CHARLIES and SARGEANT SMACK AND EASY COMPANY (Organ Magazine, San Francisco). He says: "I've always felt that one of the functions of a cartoonist or a political cartoonist or just a cartoonist who is working as a commentator is to take all the information that's around him, consolidate it in some way, and put it out there again in a consolidated form with or without a heavy commentary. The stuff that I did that had to do with the Viet Nam war, for instance, didn't say stop the war, it didn't even say the war is a bad thing; it just said like here come these guys back from the war and here's a little story about 'em, and here's what they do. It doesn't say they're good or bad or that the war did this to them."



GREG IRONS' NEW T-SHIRTS MODELLED HERE BY GREG AND ANNE MOEN MAY BE PURCHASED FROM HIM c/o COMIX WORLD BOX 7081, BERKELEY, CA 94707. $10.50 ea. Check to GREG IRONS. Specify size and design. There are four: DEATH BIKER, DRAGON, OCTOPUS, and TREES AND MOUNTAIN.



A TOAST

Clay--"Looking at it from the present, Greg, how do you feel about the attitude reflected in the comix that you drew? Can you look at LEGION OF CHARLIES and some of this other material and be satisfied with it from where you are now?"

"Sure. There's nothing that I did that I'm ashamed of. I developed a lot as a cartoonist, especially the first four or five years I was doing those comix. The stuff that I did was crude the first couple of years. I had kind of a breakthrough in 1971, '72, my style began to change."

Clay--"This was during the period you were collaborating with Tom Veitch?"

"Before that. Before that, I had a real style change. Right after the first SLOW DEATH. I began to really look at comics. I switched from using a rapidograph pen to a brush. By the time I was working with Veitch, the change had pretty much happened. By the time we were doing DEVIANT SLICE I felt like I could do anything I wanted with the medium."

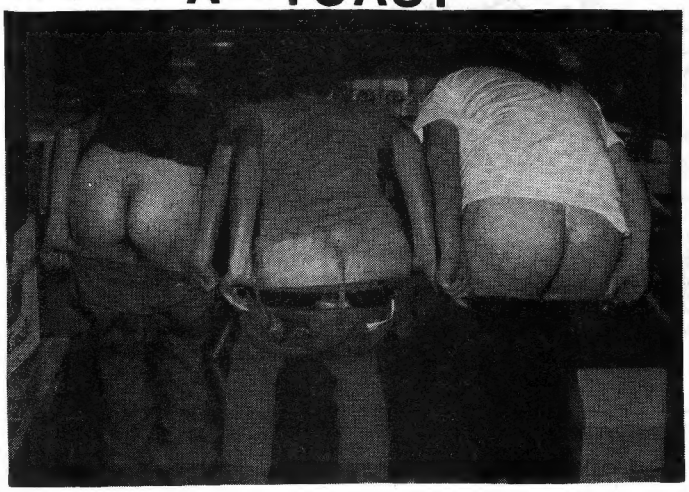
"How did you meet Tom Veitch?"

"He was the friend of some friends. I saw the TOM VEITCH MAGAZINE. I guess he sent me a copy each time. He lived near Jaxon and me on Potrero Hill. I thought he was real good and I realized that one of the things that would really facilitate the kind of things I wanted to do would be to collaborate with a writer. The first big project we did was the LEGION OF CHARLIES. I had this idea to do a short strip which is the prologue, the parallel between Lt. Calley and Charlie Manson, who did virtually the same thing, which is to say, they blew lots of people away. I showed the strip to Veitch and we decided to expand on it, to do a full book, and we did." Paranoid about the reaction to CHARLIES, Greg moved to Stinson Beach during this period and hid out. A lot of hate mail came to Last Gasp concerning the comic, not a few death threats from vets who didn't agree with anything in Greg's comic. Others who were anti-war felt that Irons and Veitch were exploiting the war for money. After SKULL 6 (half Irons, Half Corben, by Tom Veitch) and SLOW DEATH 5, Irons got out of comix for a couple of years to give himself time to think. He had gotten a reputation for drawing violent and crazy comics and he was concerned about "the karmic implications of it all." "I wasn't trying to draw the worst things I could think of. I was trying to make a point."

Clay--"What are you doing now with this new character--Gregor the purple-assed baboon that you've used in WIRTHAM's COMIX AND STORIES 4 and SLOW DEATH 10?"

"When I started comix again, one of the things that interested me was Leonard Rifas' CORPORATE CRIME and the idea of doing serious comics, comics that would have a clear function. I needed a difference focus on comics. I didn't want to go on drawing sex and violence over and over again... I've never used a single character over and over and I like the idea of using the monkey for awhile." On a panel at the San Diego Con, Greg referred to his monkey as a vehicle for his own experiences and reflections. He has written three stories so far and intends to go on with Gregor until the character is exhausted for him.

-Interviewed Aug 8, 1979.

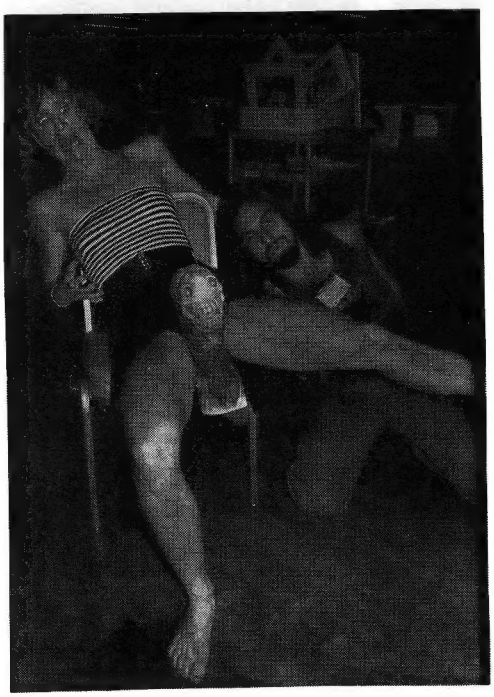


To The San Diego Censors!

THE TENTH ANNUAL SAN DIEGO COMIC CONVENTION

An old EAST VILLAGE OTHER strip by Spain triggered censorship of the SD CON Program at this year's comics con and the convention was cited for violation of the child labor laws because teenagers were used as gofers! This was the first year the SD CON used the town convention center (and probably the last). Under the leadership of Richard Butner and David Scroggy, the con put more emphasis on ugs this year and there were more back issue ugs around the huge dealer's room. The ug panel featured Larry Todd, Spain, Denis Kitchen, Ron Turner, Greg Irons, Scroggy and Clay Geerdes. Boxell, Shaw and Pound talked about ug funny animals. Trina did her slide show re the image of women in comics. She and Melinda Gebbie walked out on Mort Walker, Harvey Kurtzman and Dan O'Neill in protest (Trina was upset over Walker's references to housewives.). Bil Stout talked about Sci-Fi Production art. Scott Shaw said WILD ANIMALS was at the printer. Byron Werner (shown with the Skanty Panties poster below) had FAMOUS POTATOES 5 out--$1.50pp from him at 455 N. Doheny Dr, #101, Beverly Hills, CA 90210.* Carol Lay gave me JAPANESE MONSTER #1, a nice 30¢ comic. * The Mouse Liberation Front was all over the place with t-shirts and buttons (In my next issue, I'll have pix of O'Neill and a rap on Floyd Gottfredson, the man who drew the mouse O'Neill mousenapped.)* From England, MOON #3 is out. Below, Pepper and Malissa, belly dancers & Big Red and George DiCaprio meet the Alien.

BYRON WERNER



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